

MINUTES
Governor's State Trails Council Meeting
O'Donnell Park – Miller Room, 910 East Michigan St.
Milwaukee, WI
10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

State Trails Council Members Present: Mike McFadzen, David Phillips, Randy Harden, Connie Loden, Ken Carpenter, Alison Dwyer

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present: Bill Morrissey, Brigit Brown, Melissa Cook, Jeremy Leitz

Others present: Sue Black, Shawn Schmidt, Guy Smith, Harold Schmidt, Dave Rowley, John Schnorr, Scott Makowski, Doug Johnson, Jay Larson, Marty Weigel, Scott Walker, Mark Borkowski, Bridget Bannon, Angie Tornes, Dave Schlabowske, Lois Kawatski, Bob Anderson

State Trails Council Members Not In Attendance: Ramsey Lee

10:00 A.M.: Welcome and Introductions

Mike McFadzen welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. Introductions were given.

Sue Black, Milwaukee County Parks Director, gave a presentation describing the Milwaukee County Parks System, including responsibilities, properties, budget, and activities. She discussed a resolution that was written to create a Milwaukee County Trails Council. This is in its beginning stages, but the group is forming. Mike McFadzen asked Sue about any Parks budget issues and about the formation of Friends groups. Sue mentioned the budget is always an issue, but prefers to focus on the revenue side on determining what to close or cut. Three Friends groups have formed which is helping to alleviate some budget issues. Sue indicated that she and the Milwaukee County Trails Council looks forward to working with the State Trails Council.

10:40 A.M.: Agenda Repair and Approval of April Meeting Minutes

Mike McFadzen indicated the agenda for the meeting would change as Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, originally scheduled to be present at 10:00 a.m., would not be able to attend until 2:00 P.M. Brigit Brown said she preferred to keep the agenda in the order that it is and work around Scott Walker's schedule.

Outcome: Agenda was kept as is with the understanding that the State Trails Council will shift times on the agenda to coincide with Scott Walker's appearance.

Comments were sought regarding the April meeting minutes. Dave Phillips asked who Jonathan Ela is. Mike McFadzen stated that he served on the Natural Resources Board (NRB) for the past 2+ years and is a strong supporter of trails. Bill Morrissey indicated that Mr. Ela has not been re-nominated to the NRB at this time. No other comments about the minutes were given.

Outcome: Dave Phillips made a motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Ken Carpenter. Minutes passed unanimously.

10:45 A.M.: Chair Report by Mike McFadzen

Mike congratulated Dave Phillips and Tom Huber on their reappointment to the State Trails Council. (McFadzen was also reappointed.) He also welcomed Alison Dwyer, the new bicycling representative to the Council. Alison introduced herself as an employee of the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and a long-time, avid bicyclist. Mike indicated that Connie Loden has not asked to be reappointed to the council, and thanked her for her service. Dave Phillips thanked Connie specifically for the work she did on legal issues, including federal grant issues.

Brigit noted there was nothing new to report on in regard to the Turtle Lake-to-Comstock corridor. Mike asked if there was any way to be an influence on this. Brigit stated that she would contact the legal staff to find out if anyone had been assigned the issue after Rick Henneger's retirement. Brigit indicated that there is a Rails-to-Trails Conference in Minneapolis on July 27-30 that staff and volunteers with Wisconsin trails would be attending.

Outcome: Brigit asked Bill Morrissey to send an email to Mike Lutz, DNR Section Chief-General Counsel, asking the DNR– Legal Staff to look at acquiring rails using federal grant status. Bill will send the email.

Mike mentioned that there was a legislative proposal to roll the Southern Forests, currently managed by the Bureau of Parks, to the Division of Forestry. This would include all trails that pass through these forests. However, this was not included in the budget and these forests will remain in the Bureau of Parks. The forestry proposal is still in circulation.

The Resolution addressing making snowmobile trails safer in Wisconsin proved controversial, however the resolution had an impact. Snowmobile groups felt they were singled out unfairly in this resolution. Mike noted that he tried to include all motorized recreation in the resolution, but due to time constraints it was limited to snowmobiles. Randy Harden stated that the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) is working on this issue. Scott Makowski, President of AWSC, said that the resolution was taken negatively by snowmobilers. The AWSC has a long history of working with the WiDNR and are strongly behind a nighttime speed limit. Scott indicated there is a new zero tolerance campaign coming out entitled "Drunk Driving is Drunk Driving No Matter What You Drive." Posters are currently in the works for this campaign and Wisconsin will receive 20,000 of these. Scott noted that while alcohol and lack of proper education

are major issues, their biggest problem is stupidity. Mike McFadzen asked if the legislature is developing any rules to curtail these problems. Scott stated that one possibility was to establish checkpoints. However, this was made illegal and would require a statutory change. Brigit felt that increasing warden time on trails and working more with recreation issues would help. Randy Harden noted that the Tavern League needs to be more involved. Dave Phillips asked if there are any statistics on the number of accidents per mile driven in motorized recreation. It was indicated that there was for motorcycles, but no one was for certain whether or not this data existed for other types of motorized recreation. However, this data would be meaningful. Doug Johnson stated that increased snowfall leads to a longer season and more fatalities. Connie Loden indicated that less snowfall leads to increased concentration of users where snow is more heavily present.

Outcome: Mike McFadzen stated the intention was not to single out snowmobiling as the only use with this issue. State Trails Council will likely revisit this issue.

The Sustainable Trails Workshop held in Oconomoc was well received and seen as a success. Melissa Cook noted that the trail tour at the Southern Kettle Moraine was the most beneficial.

Potential agenda items for future meetings can be called for at the current meeting. Also, when minutes are distributed, included with that will be a listing of upcoming agenda items gathered at the last meeting. All Council members are encouraged to propose agenda items for consideration by the Council.

11:15 A.M.: DNR Report by Bill Morrissey and Brigit Brown

Bill indicated that he is often asked how the Wisconsin State Park System compares to other states. His response is “not good.” Wisconsin is last in percent of state budget used for State Park System expenditures. This information is available in the 2005 Annual Information Exchange. He noted that the Wisconsin Park System does more with less and that the system is understaffed. The Parks system will rely on the State Trails Council.

A new Statewide Plan is being developed. Numerous town meetings have been held across the state to gather public input for the plan. Equestrian groups have been strong at these meetings. The plan needs a vision and blueprints, and to show potential for the system.

The state budget has passed on to the governor. Ken Carpenter reminded Bill that STC members have user groups behind them and that they should be utilized in some manner. The WiDNR cannot directly inform STC members what they should do in regard to these budget issues, but rather the Public Policy Committee of the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks can. It is encouraged that users contact their legislators. Bill ended by thanking everyone for his or her service on the council.

Britt thanked everyone for the help they are doing in regards to the State Parks Strategic Plan. She mentioned that the Strategic Plan for trails needs to be redone. This is in it's beginning stages and an outside source will write the plan with help from the WiDNR, STC, and public.

Britt noted that there has been an increase in crime on trails, especially on rail trails. There have been 4 trail muggings in the past month, all near more developed areas. Dave Phillips asked if there have been any arrests, and Britt indicated there had been one. If this issue gets bigger, the STC should get involved. Connie Loden stated that increased crime could become a problem when advocating for a trail as adjacent landowners may not want the trail near them or on their property.

Transportation Enhancement money was not increased for Wisconsin in 2004. The STC should advocate for this by contacting their legislators.

11:40 A.M.: Welcome to Southeast Region and Overview of Regional Trails – Melissa Cook (WiDNR)

Melissa Cook provided background on the Hank Aaron State Trail. There is one section complete by Miller Park. There is a need to develop a city-wide trail. This trail would pass through the three highest density areas in the state. It would also restore ecosystems, increase education, and increase economic activity. A 5-mile section is to be completed by next summer that runs from Miller Park to the lakefront. This trail will be within a 15-minute bike ride of more than 300,000 people and will be a link to connect Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. A railroad company has filed a rail for abandonment, which could be used to connect the Hank Aaron State Trail with the Oakleaf Trail, essentially doubling the length of the trail. There is a meeting on this in July. Mike McFadden indicated that this trail would be huge for people who wish to commute to work.

Outcome: Melissa Cook will inform Mike, Britt, and Jeremy as to the meeting date in regard to the abandoned rail line and they will pass this information along.

Melissa noted that there has been a large expansion of rails-to-trails in all counties in the Southeast region and that there exists great partnerships.

11:50 A.M.: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Update – Jeremy Leitz

Jeremy Leitz gave a presentation on the status of SCORP. Demand data gathering and analysis is now complete. Collection of supply data is now complete and analysis has begun. A review of the recreation conflict component was given. Some preliminary results were shown. Also provided was the website for SCORP (<http://dnr.wi.gov/planning/scorp/>) where all reports, forms, presentations, etc. can be found.

Next Step: Jeff Prey will attend the next STC meeting on October, 10 and provide another update on SCORP.

12:00 P.M.: Lunch

12:45 P.M.: Bylaws, Requirements of STC Members, Policy to Allow Delegates to Attend When a Member Cannot – Brigit Brown

Brigit indicated that the changes in the bylaws were mainly editorial and procedural changes. A section was reworded on the responsibilities of the department. At the request of the Council (at the April meeting) a section was added to allow STC members to appoint a delegate to attend in their place if the member was unable to attend. Dave Phillips asked if this was legal and Brigit indicated that other councils were allowing it. Connie Loden asked if they would be able to vote. Ken Carpenter indicated one possibility of having the delegate carry forward the vote of the absent member on a known upcoming vote. Connie Loden stated she has no problem with allowing a delegate to attend, but does not feel they should vote. Dave Phillips was concerned over the idea of a delegate as the governor appoints you. It could affect the credibility of the Council. Connie noted her concern of someone abusing the privilege. Randy Harden asked if we could define delegate and feels the delegate should not vote.

Outcome: There was agreement to vote on the language of the delegate proposal at the next meeting. The changes in the bylaws will be voted on at the next meeting.

Brigit passed around a sheet describing the responsibilities of STC members. These are not bylaws. Members would sign the form, indicating their agreement to the terms listed on the form. The reverse side of the form has background on the STC and information about legal requirements of membership. Comments were sought on the form. The only change was to replace the word “call” with “contact” under the section about attendance at meetings.

Outcome: A motion to accept the form was made. The form passed unanimously.

1:15: Trail Funding Update – Ken Carpenter

Ken provided an update on trail funding issues at the federal level. A version of the Transportation Enhancement (TE) bill has passed in both the House and Senate and is now in conference committee. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is included in both versions. The Hank Aaron State Trail, the Wisconsin Dells Area, and the Ice Age Trail all got money from TE.

An initiative called “Equestrians Right to Ride” calls for allowing equine riders to be allowed back on native land where horses were the historic mode of travel.

Mike McFadzen indicated that the Wisconsin Nordic Network (WINN) is tuned into funding issues.

Ken gave an update on Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Outcome: Ken has been asked to keep STC members informed of various budget issues he follows.

1:30 P.M. Effect of Lobbying – Marty Weigel (WI Off-Road Bicycling Association)

Marty indicated that lobbying by constituents is more influential than lobbying done by businesses, special interest groups, and professional lobbyists. A well thought-out letter or phone call can be extremely effective.

IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) will hold a presentation and class October 13-17 at the Milwaukee County grounds. Topics include design and management of sustainable trails.

1:40 P.M.: Strategic Plan for Trails, Trail Use – Brigit Brown

The Strategic Plan for Trails is in the initial stages. This summer Brigit will write a request for proposal to have an outside agency write the plan.

Brigit gave an update on the status of cooperative trails. In particular, the Amery-Dresser State Trail exists as a cooperative trail due to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the county. The county determines the uses, etc. The Bureau is currently taking a second look at the Cooperative Trail Agreements as the DNR was recently sued over this.

The MOU's explain the baseline rights and responsibilities of both the county and the DNR. The easement gives the counties the right to follow through on the MOU. Both the MOU and Easement forms are dynamic documents that are regularly reviewed.

Brigit mentioned that Wisconsin has the most rail-banked miles in the U.S. A write-up describing rail to trail process was passed out.

2:00 P.M.: Logging on State Trails – Brigit Brown

An internal DNR meeting was held to discuss logging alongside trails on July 5, 2005 with representatives from Parks, Forestry, and Real Estate present. The meeting was held to discuss logging techniques and practices alongside trails and how to minimize the impact to trails. Three items came out of the meeting; first, guidelines will be developed for vegetative management zones; second, literature will be developed to educate both users and foresters about logging practices; and third, notifications will be sent to user groups when logging meetings occur that pertain to trails.

The Forestry Department's Silviculture Handbook-Aesthetic Management was distributed. Dave Phillips indicated that the handbook was good, but it does not cover everything.

The American Transmission Company (ATC) has developed a plan to use trails to place high-powered electrical lines to distribute power. An existing law (Act 89) states that all lines along trails must be buried, but the ATC interpreted this law to mean lines must be buried only when possible, and that if it is not cost effective for a power company to bury lines, then they can be placed above ground. Connie Loden indicated that while we do not want to see power lines along every trail, we need to work together with the ATC. The state, or some potential trail owner, may need to ask to place a trail along an ATC power line corridor some day. Also, burial of all lines is cost-prohibitive. Mike McFadzen asked what the role of the STC is in this. It was determined that the STC should draft a resolution.

Outcome: Mike, Brigit, and Dave will draft a resolution in regard to this issue and a vote will take place via email, as prompt action is necessary.

2:15 P.M.: Scott Walker, Milwaukee County Executive

Shortly after the arrival of Mr. Scott Walker, County Executive, Milwaukee County, Mike McFadzen gave a presentation to County Executive Walker and members of the Milwaukee County Trails Council in regard to the benefits that trails provide. Walker then addressed the group expressing his support of parks and trails. He recognizes their importance and looks forward to working with both the State Trails Council and Milwaukee County Trails Council.

2:30: Other Business of the State Trails Council

Bill Morrissey indicated that the Bureau of Parks is looking to develop an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Park (Recreation Area). The park will be based on existing models from other states.

Ken Carpenter stated that in May of 2006 there will be a session and certification of designing of sustainable equine trails. They wish to open this up to the WiDNR and other trail managers.

2:45 P.M.: Public Comment

John Schnorr indicated that the Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association (WOHVA) is against the policy to allow delegates to attend a meeting when STC members cannot. They feel it undermines the integrity of the governor's appointees. On August 6, 2005 WOHVA and Jeepers will be hosting a trail ride for the Forest County Government, Tribal Councils, and others. They want to demonstrate how to properly ride an OHV without damaging trails and ecosystems. He extends the invite to all STC members and their user groups. For more information email info@wohva.com.

Randy Harden extended an invite to all STC members to a National Forests Meeting.

3:00 P.M. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Connie Loden, and seconded by Dave Phillips.

Outcome: Meeting adjourned.